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AUTHOR Wegman, Edward
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ABSTRACT

Noting that the technological revolution in book production has led to more effective means of distribution and increased the number and variety of reading materials available in the world, this report examines several issues connected with the international circulation of books. Following a brief introduction to the subject, the various sections of the report deal with the following topics: (1) books in the service of international understanding and peace, (2) international trade in books, (3) book distribution networks and problems, (4) standards and standard setting, and (5) measures to ease the flow of books. (FL)

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Studies on Books and Reading No. 3

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULATION OF BOOKS

by Edward Wegman

ED234346

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This document is one of a series prepared as background material for the World Congress on Books to be held in London, United Kingdom, from 7 to 11 June 1982.

The author was formerly Head of the Free Flow Section of the Unesco Office of Free Flow of Information and International Exchanges, and was concerned for many years with activities designed to improve the international circulation of books. This document, which dwells on some important aspects of this question, is a result of his investigations and of his active participation in projects for book development and publishing.

The author is responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this text, and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of Unesco and do not commit the Organization.

CONTENTS

		Page
Introduction		3
I.	Books in the service of international understanding and peace	3
	International Book Year	4
	IBY sequels	5
II.	International trade in books	6
	Production	7
	Exports	7
	Imports	9
	Trade by category of book	10
III.	Distribution networks and problems	12
	Rights and fairs	14
	Major distribution problems	14
	(i) Language	14
	(ii) Transport charges	15
	(iii) Quotas and frontier formalities	16
IV.	Standard-setting	16
	Copyright	17
	(i) Berne Convention	18
	(ii) Universal Copyright Convention	18
	Importation of educational, scientific and cultural materials	20
	(i) "Florence Agreement"	20
	(ii) Protocol to the "Florence Agreement"	21
	(iii) Customs conventions on temporary importation	21
	Unesco conventions on the exchange of publications	22
V.	Supplementary measures to ease the flow of books	22
	GATT	23
	UNCTAD	23
	Unesco Coupon Scheme	24
	Universal Postal Union	24
	International Air Transport Association	25
	Government initiatives	25
	Activities by the book professionals	26
Select bibliography		28

Introduction

The book, from its beginnings, has always been international in tone and in fact. It has been a vehicle for ideas to spread throughout the reading world. In recent years, the international trend has accelerated. The technological revolution in production has been matched by increasingly effective means of distribution and one result has been a virtual explosion in the number of titles and copies available throughout the world.

Although prices for paper have soared, this has been counter-balanced in part by reductions in some other manufacturing costs through the use of typewriter and photocomposition as well as computer-assisted editing. Despite the continuing high number of illiterates, the reading public has grown enormously with the expansion of population, and the demand for educational publications has been stimulated by massive efforts to promote educational, scientific and cultural development.

The picture is not as rosy as it appears at first glance. The overwhelming share of this expanded production originates in a comparatively few technologically developed countries, just as it was at the time of International Book Year 1972. Similarly, the share of international trade in books that falls to the developing countries has grown very slowly.

Since requirements remain high for books to aid progress, the trade in books has grown by leaps and bounds. Confronted with limited production, developing countries are still forced, therefore, to expend precious foreign currency to import the books they need. The question they seek to resolve is how to break out of that pattern. After all, books are not only food for the mind; they are industrial products and the industries that turn out books also require consideration and also can produce national wealth.

It is thus apparent that the pattern of communication by word and image has changed less than might have been expected, despite the evident co-operation between developed and developing worlds in the realm of the book. The major book exporters have recognized that book development serves to widen readership and that national production, far from threatening their world markets, in fact increases overall consumption of books. This enlightened self-interest has led to provision of all sorts of technical advice, training and assistance on the part of book publishers as well as governments in developed states. There has also been recognition of the importance of the printed word in promoting peace and international understanding.

The present paper examines the position of books in the service of international understanding, international trade in books, including distribution networks and problems. It then turns to the standards that have been set and other measures to liberalize the flow of books.

I. Books in the service of international understanding and peace

Although the international movement of books represents less than one-half of one per cent of world trade in terms of money, it is not the amount of books shipped nor their dollar value that is the most important. Books are the purveyors of ideas and their influence extends far beyond their numbers. It is necessary, therefore, in discussing the international circulation of books, to keep in mind the different kinds of information they can convey. Some books are produced to provide pleasure; more are intended to impart knowledge or to convince the reader of a particular point of view.

Limited only by language comprehension, the printed word can carry ideas across centuries and frontiers. Where the physical book sometimes cannot go, translations into other languages enlarge its audience.

Books were the first of the mass media. As such, the Declaration of fundamental principles concerning the contribution of the mass media to strengthening peace and international understanding, to the promotion of human rights and to countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war certainly applies to books. The Declaration, adopted in 1978, notes in Article III that books, along with other media, "by disseminating information on the aims, aspirations, cultures and needs of all peoples, contribute to eliminate ignorance and misunderstanding between peoples, to make nationals of a country sensitive to the needs and desires of others, to ensure the respect of the rights of all...".

The type and intent of a book, at least in market economy countries, are decided in the first instance by the author or translator and then by the publisher and bookseller. At the end of the chain, the potential reader confirms or rejects these opinions when he buys or ignores the product. In centrally planned economies, the state or a state-controlled body fulfills the predominant function in the selection, production and distribution of a book. But ultimately it is still the consumer who decides whether or not he wishes to read the book.

In either case, it is apparent that most books present a message, even if, on occasion, merely a frivolous one. Where books enter the mainstream of international commerce, their message can influence readers in other countries. For all these reasons, the Declaration cited above emphasizes "the moral obligation to seek the facts without prejudice and to spread knowledge without malicious intent".

This concern with the role of books (and other mass media) is not a new preoccupation for Unesco. From the outset it had been considered fundamental. This is in large measure an expression of the desire to erect the defences of peace in the minds of men, as Unesco's Constitution puts it. At the same time, Unesco realized that many of its aspirations - such as the elimination of illiteracy or the development of indigenous cultures - could not be dissociated from printed matter. As the Constitution puts it, Unesco should give "the people of all countries access to the printed and published materials produced by any of them". To which the Declaration of the principles of international cultural co-operation, adopted in 1966, adds in Article VII "broad dissemination of ideas and knowledge, based on the freest exchange and discussion, is essential to creative activity, the pursuit of truth and the development of the personality".

International Book Year

When the General Conference at its sixteenth session proclaimed International Book Year, it considered "the importance of the written word for the progress of human civilization" as well as the fact that books "play an essential role in social life and its development" and "perform a fundamental function in the realization of... peace, development, the promotion of human rights and the campaign against racialism and colonialism". Two years later, in assessing the results of the Year, the General Conference reaffirmed "the role of books in literary, scientific and philosophical culture and in the free flow of ideas, as well as the importance of the quality and content of books in the realization of Unesco's objectives".

International Book Year 1972 was built around four themes which reflected the considered judgement of Member States. They were also selected in part by the international professional organizations of the book trade and in part by interested experts who had participated in various regional meetings on book development. The general headings were: encouragement of authorship and translation, with due regard to copyright; production and distribution of books, including the development of libraries; promotion of the reading habit; and books in the service of education, international understanding and peaceful co-operation.

For each theme, suggestions were appended regarding action that might be undertaken. These concrete proposals were addressed to governments, National Commissions and other national bodies in the first place. There were others for non-governmental organizations, including particularly those connected with the book profession, and to Unesco itself, since each of these three entities could embark upon specific activities not always possible for the two others. The ideas were intended to stimulate innovation by indicating what could be done. There was nothing limitative in the suggestions.

The success of International Book Year can only be measured in the long run by the degree of involvement of the first two bodies in each specific country. Some nations were more active than others, although almost all states - including a number that were not even members of Unesco - contributed in one way or another. It may be noted that more than half of Unesco's Member States set up special national committees for International Book Year. The professional organizations of publishers, printers, librarians, documentalists, booksellers and translators were particularly effective on an international basis as well as at the national level. Educators, authors, reading specialists and the general community (as exemplified by youth groups, cultural centres, etc.) were also involved to a very large extent in most parts of the globe. The press and other media provided abundant information on activities. Intergovernmental organizations, in so far as their programmes involved books or could influence them, also contributed to the campaign. Unesco's role was essentially one of stimulation, co-ordination and information.

In preparation for International Book Year, an International Support Committee, with broad geographical and professional distribution, adopted a Charter of the Book, the first document of this nature to be approved on a worldwide scale. It annotated ten principles: everyone has the right to read; books are essential to education; society has a special obligation to establish the conditions in which authors can exercise their creative role; a sound publishing industry is essential to national development; book manufacturing facilities are necessary to the development of publishing; booksellers provide a fundamental service as a link between publishers and the reading public; libraries are national resources for the transfor of information and knowledge, for the enjoyment of wisdom and beauty; documentation serves books by preserving and making available essential background material; the free flow of books between countries is an essential supplement to national supplies and promote international understanding; books serve international understanding and peaceful co-operation.

IBY sequels

In the light of its examination of International Book Year, the General Conference of Unesco decided that there should be a follow-up and that the same four themes enunciated for 1972 should be employed as objectives of a long-term programme of promotion of books and reading. At the top of the list, the General Conference placed "books in the service of education, internationational understanding and peaceful co-operation".

Three years later, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe at Helsinki adopted a final act which sets forth a goal of contributing "to the strengthening of peace and understanding among peoples" through increased cultural and educational exchanges and broader dissemination of information, inter alia. To that end, states should "encourage their competent firms and organizations to conclude agreements and contracts designed gradually to increase the quantities and the number of titles of newspapers and publications imported from the other participating states".

The Unesco Declaration on the mass media, for its part, emphasizes the situation of the developing countries and asserts that "for the establishment of a new equilibrium and greater reciprocity in the flow of information, which will be conducive to the institution of a just and lasting peace and to the economic and political independence of the developing countries, it is necessary to correct the inequalities in the flow of information to and from developing countries, and between those countries".

The present patterns of world trade in books would seem to follow these two admonitions, which might be summarized as follows: (i) promote by all possible means greater interchanges among developed countries; (ii) seek a more equitable ratio in the pattern of book exchanges between the developed and the developing parts of the world. Subsumed in this second point is the wish to stimulate closer commercial relations, in so far as information is concerned, between the developing countries themselves.

II. International trade in books

A statistical analysis of world trade in books is complicated by the difficulty of obtaining fully comparable information for each state. The most commonly used category is called the Standard International Trade Classification, which is used by the United Nations. SITC number 89 covers miscellaneous manufactured goods. Carried one step further, SITC 892 deals with printed matter while 892.1 narrows the subject to printed books, pamphlets, children's picture books, scientific maps, globes etc. SITC 892.11 eliminates all the extraneous materials and is concerned only with books and pamphlets.

The problem is that not all states can provide such detailed information. (Often, the quantities involved are too small.) For that reason, the SITC number 892.1 covering books, pamphlets, children's picture books, scientific maps and globes, etc. will be used unless otherwise specified. In other words, a minor part of the figures cited will not be books but some other printed matter.

The definition of a book used in all these statistics is the one adopted by the General Conference of Unesco: a non-periodical literary publication containing 49 or more pages, not counting the covers. A pamphlet is a non-periodical printed publication of at least 5 but not more than 48 pages, exclusive of the cover pages.

A second difficulty is that the above-mentioned statistics provide information on the dollar value of exchanges and sporadically on their weight or their number (but never both weight and number). Since books vary greatly in weight, the tonnage will not be given. In view of the fact that one cannot give the quantities in a sufficient number of cases to permit meaningful comparison, the number of copies will not be given either. The United Nations statistics do not provide data on the subject-matter of the books imported or exported. Here, one can only note the national production described in the Unesco Statistical Yearbook, which is divided according to the nine main branches of the Universal Decimal Classification: generalities, philosophy, religion, social sciences, pure sciences, applied sciences, arts, literature, history and geography. The Unesco Yearbook also offers statistics on textbook production, including, however, only the number of titles and copies, not the subject-matter.

In some cases, national statistics can fill in some of the gaps, although in others, they are not available in detail since such data are considered trade secrets. The drawback to national data is that they are not always comparable with the international figures. While this raises some problems, statistics concerning one major exporter will be presented to provide some indication of international trade in books by subject-matter. For the most part, unless otherwise noted, data

will refer to the year 1977 since this is the year for which information is at hand from the greatest number of countries. Later data, where available, do not indicate any major changes in patterns.(1)

Production

Since one cannot export if one does not produce, the starting-point for an examination of world trade patterns in books must be national or regional production. The very latest information covers 1978 when world book production totalled 642,000 titles. Of these, 527,000 were produced by developed countries. Developing states turned out 115,000 titles. Developing countries were thus producing only 17.9 per cent of book titles. (Further details can be found in the Unesco Statistical Yearbook 1980, summary titles 6.1.) Ten years earlier, they produced nearly 20 per cent of all titles.

Among the developed countries, the USSR published 85,395 titles (1977 figures), while the United States of America had 85,126. In third place was the Federal Republic of Germany, followed by Japan, the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Brazil, Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, Canada, India and China. These thirteen countries were responsible for almost 68 per cent of the books in the world. Ten years earlier, the USSR, the United States, United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, France and Spain alone produced about 57 per cent of all titles.

Exports

Book exports in 1977 totalled $2,116,884,000, of which the developing countries accounted for $288,052,000. It should be noted that 1977 was a particularly good year for the developing countries. The 13.6 per cent of total exports is considerably higher than in 1972 (6.8%) or in 1978 (9.2%). Preliminary indications are that the developing countries exported 8 per cent of books in world trade in 1979 when the market had grown to $3,124,977,000. The developing country share of world trade is thus growing, although by a very small percentage.

It would be logical to assume that the major book producers would be the major book exporters. But this is not always the case - at least, not directly.(2) Language also has its importance. Japanese is little spoken outside its country of origin. The same applies to Korean. One-third of India's production (4,393 titles) is in English, but the rest is in Indian languages, few of which have many readers outside the sub-continent. The Netherlands also produces significant numbers of titles in languages other than Dutch and, besides, has a possible outlet in other Dutch-speaking former colonies or zones of influence.

The United Nations list of the major book exporters for 1977, based on the dollar value of their shipments, shows the United States of America and the United Kingdom in the lead, followed in decreasing order by the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium/Luxembourg, Italy, Switzerland, Argentina, Austria, Japan and Hong Kong. (Data from centrally planned economies, such as the USSR and China are not given in the United Nations Yearbook.) It may be noted in passing that during 1979, France exceeded the Federal Republic of Germany in the value of book exports.

(1) Figures are taken from the 1979 United Nations Yearbook of International Trade Statistics, Vol. II. New York, United Nations, 1980.

(2) Translations are also a way of exporting in that they permit the transmission of the ideas contained in books if not the original printed pages.

Before proceeding to a detailed look at some of the exporting countries, some comment is called for on the leaders given above. It is not surprising to find the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, or Belgium/Luxembourg among the leaders in view of the large number of countries in Africa and Asia where English and French are widely used. The German-speaking countries of Austria, Federal Republic of Germany and parts of Switzerland exchange primarily among each other. Spain and Argentina have as potential markets the broad Spanish-speaking public of the Americas. The comment earlier about the fact that the Netherlands publishes in other languages than its own probably applies also to Japan and Hong Kong. These three, plus Italy and Spain, probably benefit also from the fact that their printing industries are international in nature. In other words, they produce books for publishers in other countries.

Compared with the principal book exporters, Brazil, which is a major producer, is twenty-fifth on the list despite the existence of markets in Portugal and Africa. The Republic of Korea is twenty-seventh and India twenty-ninth.

Where do the exports go? An examination of a few countries' exports, selected to provide a broad picture of various regions and languages, will give some indication of trade patterns.

The United States of America (including Puerto Rico), with book and pamphlet[(1)] exports totalling in 1977 $335,974,000 ($532,493,000 in 1979), shipped about 16.5 per cent of this to developing countries. Its major markets were its traditional trading partners: notably, Canada, which received United States books worth $154,679,000, United Kingdom, $32,996,000, Australia, $27,934,000, Japan, $15,974,000 and the Netherlands $10,028,000. If the other members of the European Economic Community are added (Belgium/Luxembourg, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland and Italy) these twelve countries took almost 70 per cent of all United States book exports.

U.S.A. exports to the developing countries were divided as follows: $8,003,000 to the Arab World; $2,824,000 to Africa south of the Sahara; $22,157,000 to Latin America, and $20,037,000 to Asia, exclusive of Japan. While the United States of America has a flourishing Spanish-language publishing programme, it may be assumed that the vast majority of these books were in English. It is interesting to look at which developing countries are the most important markets for United States books.

Among the Arab states, Saudia Arabia is first with purchases totalling $2,411,000 in 1977. It represents 25 per cent of the Arab market which is not surprising in view of its wealth and the fact that English is used extensively.

In Africa, Nigeria, also an English-language area, outstripped other states, with imports of $1,393,000 - almost 50 per cent of American exports to that region. Once again, Nigeria is also an oil-wealthy state.

Among the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, Mexico imported $4,526,000 while Venezuela took $3,378,000. Both produce oil and, in addition, Mexico borders upon the United States. Brazil, for its part, imported from the United States of America books worth $4,279,000.

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(1) The country-by-country data for the United States of America are based on 892.11, which shows total book and pamphlet sales only. The total under 892.1 is $323,018,000, indicating map and children's book sales of $12,956,000. In fact, it is known that children's books amounted to $2,296,000 so maps and globes brought in $10,660,000.

In Asia, book imports from the United States of America to India totalled $4,919,000, to the Philippines $3,695,000, to Indonesia $2,433,000. Singapore, which has become a major book transshipper as well as printer, importer and exporter, purchased books worth $4,572,000 from the United States.

Turning to another book exporter, statistics from India for the same period are instructive, even though they include scientific maps, globes, etc. (Classification 892.1), which the United States of America data did not. India exported books worth $3,541,000, of which $2,572,000 went to developing countries. Only 26 per cent was sold to developed nations and, of this, almost 20 per cent went to just two countries: United States of America, which imported books worth $372,000 and the United Kingdom, $320,000. Two-thirds of India's book exports were shipped to other Asian countries, including the Middle East. They received $2,173,000 worth of books. Africa took $390,000, of which $114,000 went to Nigeria. Exports to Latin America were not significant enough to be recorded in the United Nations data.

During 1977, Mexico exported $44,436,000 worth of books, pamphlets, children's picture books, scientific maps and globes, etc.: $15,704,000 to developed countries and $28,722,000 to developing countries. The United States imported from Mexico $6,051,000, almost a third more than it sold to Mexico. This represented 13.6 per cent of Mexico's book exports although the United States of America is not officially a Spanish-speaking country. Spain, which is, took $3,522,000 worth of books. Virtually all the rest of the book exports also went to Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America. There were no significant exports to Africa or Asia.

During the same period, Saudia Arabia exported $196,000 worth of printed books, globes, etc. Of this total, $164,000 went to the Syrian Arab Republic. Another $7,000 worth of books was exported to other countries of the Middle East, while $5,000 went to developing countries in other parts of the world. It is assumed that many of these exports were linked to religious subjects since Saudi Arabia is a place of pilgrimage for Muslims.

Kenya exported $2,030,000 worth of books, pamphlets, scientific maps, etc., all but $125,000 to developing countries. Although the customs union linking Kenya with Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania is long since moribund, most of Kenya's exports went to those two countries. Nevertheless, another $196,000 also was exported across the continent to Nigeria. The United Kingdom imported books worth $115,000.

Imports

It is informative to note who were the principal suppliers of the countries whose exports have just been examined. For the United States of America, imports were about half as large as exports. The United Kingdom provided slightly more than one-third of the $185,227,000 imported in 1977. The Federal Republic of Germany sold $24,000,000 while Spain and Japan shipped roughly $12,000,000 each. Italy supplied $11,000,000. These five countries thus made up 66 per cent of American book imports. India, Saudi Arabia and Kenya sold minimal supplies, if any, to the United States of America, but Mexico, as noted above, exported $6,000,000 worth of books.

India imported four times as many books as exported. Of the $12,000,000 worth of imports, $5,000,000 came from the United States. The United Kingdom supplied $4,530,000.

Mexico retained a surplus of exports over imports. More than half of the $34,508,000 imported came from Spain. The Latin American Free Trade Area furnished $7,737,000, including almost $6,000,000 from Argentina. France and the United Kingdom together shipped some $2,500,000 worth.

Saudi Arabia, which exported virtually nothing, imported $31,758,000 in books. Of this total, Lebanon provided $18,400,000 while $5,700,000 came from North Africa and Egypt. Kuwait and the United Kingdom each shipped approximately $1,000,000, United States of America, $2,400,000.

Kenya imported a third more than it exported. Of $3,763,000 worth of book imports, $2,596,000 came from the United Kingdom. There were no significant imports from any African country, but $703,000 was brought in from Asia.

Trade by category of book

None of these statistics offer any information on the types of book that make up this international trade. For that, the sources are national rather than international. For example, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication has issued a study[1] which gives details on exports during 1977 according to categories which are, unfortunately, not the same as the Universal Decimal Classification. This makes it impossible to compare the data with French figures on production in the Unesco Statistical Yearbook.

According to this study, France exported some $56,380,000 worth of books in the fields of literature, history and geography. That represents almost one-third of all France's book exports. The next largest category, practical books, accounted for $52,250,000. Textbooks exported were worth some $15,000,000, virtually the same as sales abroad of technical, scientific and professional books. The following category covers dictionaries and encyclopedias. Here, almost $11,000,000 worth of books were exported. Social sciences, law and economy account for $5,500,000; youth, almost $4,000,000 and, finally, fine arts books valued at $1,650,000 were exported. There were also exports of some $12,000,000 worth of books in other languages and almost $3,000,000 worth of book parts or individual pages (which usually means printing for foreign publishers).

A list of the ten most important customers for books from France shows Belgium/Luxembourg in first position, followed by Canada, Switzerland and Italy. The first developing country, Ivory Coast, is fifth in order of importance and it is closely followed by Algeria and Morocco. Then comes the United States of America, Federal Republic of Germany and Spain.

It may be assumed that the last three countries, along with Italy, would be interested in the first place by French literature, while it is largely to Francophone countries that school-books are exported. In any event, these ten countries constitute three-quarters of France's market for books abroad.

It should be noted, moreover, that sales in the Francophone countries of Africa fluctuate broadly. In most cases, the Ministry of Culture says the differences from year to year are not particularly significant. Nevertheless, in 1977, as compared with the previous year, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius and Togo increased their imports from France - in some cases by as much as 144 per cent. On the other hand, Benin, Cameroon, Central Africa, Chad, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, Upper Volta and Zaire decreased purchases fairly substantially. (Moving outside

(1) "L'aide publique à la diffusion commerciale du livre français à l'étranger", La documentation française, Paris, 1978.

Africa, Lebanon jumped more than 739 per cent, which brought it back to the level of its purchases before 1976.)

At least one of the African states, Togo, received an important percentage of the books (28%) in a language other than French (unspecified in the booklet). Among the ten most important customers, this was also true for Italy (38%), Federal Republic of Germany (26%) and, presumably the United States of America and Spain, although this is not reported. Only countries with broad fluctuations were listed.

France, incidentally, imports more books than it exports ($193,000,000 in 1977). The ten most important suppliers, in order, were Italy, Belgium/Luxembourg, Switzerland, Spain, United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany, United States of America, the Netherlands, Canada and Japan.

The subjects of these books were, in order: literature, history and geography; practical books; youth; book parts or individual pages; books in languages other than French; social sciences, law and economy; technical, scientific and professional works; dictionaries and encyclopedias; art books and school books. It is evident from this summary that many of the imports were books printed abroad for French publishers - 10.67 per cent were book parts and individual pages. Others may also fall within the same category, but if they were bound abroad, as well as printed, they cannot be distinguished easily in the data provided.

There are certain conclusions that can be drawn from the United Nations data. It is apparent, for example, that the richest countries not only produce and sell the most but that their principal customers are other developed states. This linking between book trade and the financial resources of the developed states is all the more striking when it affects countries that do not use generally the same languages. Thus, Japan and the Netherlands are major purchasers of American books. The Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany are among the leading buyers of British books. After France and the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland's next most important customer is the United States of America. All in all, Europe represents 49 per cent of all book imports and 71 per cent of exports. The United States of America and Canada add 18 per cent to each figure for a total of 67 per cent of imports and 89 per cent of exports. A corollary of this is the fact that, while the developing countries represent a comparatively small percentage of the market for the major book producers and exporters, it is a largely one-way operation. That is, the developed countries buy less from the developing states than they sell them - for the most part. Moreover, the slow growth of intra-regional trade among developing countries seems to be in addition to the developed nations' sales rather than a substitute for such a dominant position. In 1972, developing countries accounted for 19.5 per cent of the total value of book imports. In 1979, their indicated share would be 21.5 per cent. This is in spite of their growing exports (8 per cent indicated for 1979 as opposed to 6.8 per cent in 1972. In 1977, it was 13.6 per cent, as mentioned earlier).

The book trade as such is a very small part of most developing countries' budgets. India's exports represent .5 per cent of its total exports; its imports 0.05 per cent. Mexican exports of books are .7 per cent of total exports and .6 per cent of imports. For Saudi Arabia, the corresponding figures are .0005 per cent for exports and .2 for imports. Kenya shows book imports of .3 per cent and exports of .17 per cent. In French-speaking Africa, Gabon's imports of $1,600,000, almost completely from France, are only .2 per cent of total imports; Togo, again almost a French monopoly as far as book imports are concerned, took .5 per cent worth of books out of total imports.

Another phenomenon to be noted is the importance of geographic proximity. Mexico ships substantial numbers of books to the United States of America, its northern neighbour. Canada, on the other border of the United States of America, is America's largest market for books, while Mexico is the U.S.' principal Spanish-language customer. India sells primarily to other Asian countries. Kenya's book market, limited as it may be, is directed primarily towards its neighbours, Uganda and Tanzania. France sells to the bordering countries of Belgium/Luxembourg, Switzerland and Italy, which together take half of its book exports.

Language is, of course, a most important factor. The three top U.S.A. customers are English speaking or reading. In the case of France also, the first three clients are French-language countries. Spain's top two customers are Venezuela and Mexico, followed by its neighbour, France, and then by the United States of America and Argentina. Three out of five are Hispanophone. Saudi Arabia's principal supplier is Lebanon. Aside from the United States of America, Mexico's customers are almost entirely from Spanish-language countries. India, where English remains a vehicular language, buys principally from the United States of America and the United Kingdom. In Japan, a number of the largest publishers have English-language subsidiaries in order to aid exports.

Language and cultural/political ties (even where the latter have loosened somewhat) play a very large role in the book trade of developing countries, especially in Africa. One-sixth of France's exports are to its former colonies and protectorates. In the case of the United Kingdom, the figure is almost one-third of all book exports. In the same way, India exports large quantities of its books to the United Kingdom.

Indian data are exemplary for another reason: the beginning of inter-regional trading by a developing country. India not only sells to Nigeria, but also to Iraq and the United Arab Emirates. The quantities are not large, but they are evidence of a trend already marked by Indian concentration on the developing Asian market for books.

III. Distribution networks and problems

There has been a steady growth in international book trade. Between 1975 and 1979, for example, book imports by the market economy countries increased by 54 per cent, while book exports grew by 52 per cent. Trade with the centrally planned economies is only partially reflected in these data. It is certain that the international movement of books was greater than the $3,341,131,000 reported in 1979. How much greater, however, is impossible to say.

Among the factors favouring the international exchange of books, as has been noted, are language, proximity and socio-political similarities. Those impeding the flow are, in the first instance, the antitheses of the above three. But there are others equally important, chief among them, price. The cost of individual books is multiplied by shipping charges and customs, and this is reflected in the price to customers. But the availability of foreign books is also conditioned by whether or not the importer can obtain the foreign currency required for their purchase. Governmental policy can thus affect both directly and indirectly the international trade in books.

In market economies, the publisher is usually the exporter while the importer tends to be an individual bookseller. This trade, therefore is made up of a multiplicity of comparatively small orders, with resultingly higher shipping costs, even where the distances are small. One answer has been for the publisher to decentralize his distribution to get closer physically to customers.

Most of the publishers now referred to as transnationals started their foreign operations in this way, says Keith Smith of the University of Sussex.(1) They are now distinguished from purely national enterprises, he continues, "by owning or controlling branch offices or subsidiaries outside their home country". In some areas of the developing world, particularly South America, the transnationals operate through agents rather than by opening their own offices.

"The head offices of transnational book publishers are concentrated in the countries that are the major exporters of books to less developed countries. British companies began the growth to transnationalism when firms such as Longman, Macmillan and Oxford University Press opened offices in India at the turn of the century. Shortly afterwards, the French publisher Hachette opened subsidiaries in countries under French influence... The United States of America did not start major exporting beyond Canada until the 1940s. Then with the collapse of German scientific and technical publishing, the growth of United States scholarships..., some United States companies moved into the world market. By 1962, McGraw-Hill, the largest United States exporter, was earning 20 per cent of its turnover from exporting. Outside Europe, the United States publishers have concentrated on East and South-East Asia, and Central and South America. Their exports have been mainly college and scientific books, whereas most of the British and French business has been in school-books."

The latter statement is somewhat open to question in view of the data quoted earlier from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. Textbooks today are considerably less important among the categories of exports. The author himself qualifies his remarks by noting that a number of less developed countries have "reserved primary school and sometimes secondary school publishing for state publishers". He also avers that transnational subsidiaries most often merely distribute their parent company's titles. This is not always the case, particularly with regard to Anglo-Saxon publishers. Both American and British publishers, taking a pragmatic view of accumulated local receipts which could be repatriated to the home office with difficulty, allow their subsidiaries to publish a percentage of local books. Since this, in turn, generates additional local currency, there comes a time when many of the local subsidiaries acquire a large degree of independence, or break away entirely from the expatriate publisher.

While the transnational publisher inhibits the development of local publishing, on the one hand, thanks to the overwhelming abundance of his resources, he thus also encourages the training of publishing personnel. Furthermore, few of the transnationals are printers or booksellers. Their operations, therefore, frequently encourage the growth of these industries in developing regions. Finally, the transnational publisher, with access to many markets around the world, often can accept a manuscript and publish it as a commercial venture when a nationally limited publisher would not have been able to do so. Their principal drawback is that they may impose a metropolitan point of view upon a developing country and, in so doing, prevent the growth of an endogenous culture. On the other hand, it should be noted that recent years have seen the development of African- or Asian-owned transnationals and that these publishers have their headquarters in developing countries.

It is probably still too early to tell what will be the effect on the transnational companies of the growing concentration of publishing in many of the market economy developed countries. Since the beginning of the 70s, there has been in the United States of America "a seemingly relentless trend towards concentrating the ownership of individual publishing houses into ever-larger corporate organizations. Privately owned publishing companies have been converted into publicly held corporations, and often these corporations have, in turn, been absorbed into huge conglomerate organizations".(2)

(1) Keith B. Smith, Impact of Transnational Book Publishing on Intellectual Knowledge in Less Developed Countries, unpublished study for Unesco, 1977.

(2) Thomas Whiteside, "Book Publishers", The New Yorker, 1980.

The American company Viking Press, for example, became part of British Penguin Books, which, in turn, was owned by a conglomerate known as the Pearson-Longman Group. Another American publisher was acquired by a German firm, while a third was bought by a Netherlands publisher.

All of this has been accompanied by increasing concentration on what is known as "trade books", that is, books for the general public rather than the specialist. One commentator on this trend has expressed the fear that most energy and funds are going to the best-seller, regardless of its real value and that these books are being merchandized in the most blatant way with resulting damage to books of literary or scientific merit. Those transnational publishers whose market is mainly in the developing world may find this kind of book less profitable than their present catalogue.

Aside from the transnational publishers, most book producers also keep their hand in international distribution. In many cases, they simply are receptive to orders from overseas. In others, particularly among the specialized publishers, they prepare announcements of their new books which are dispatched to individuals and bookstores in other countries who are known to be interested in the subject-matter concerned. Still others name national distributors in different countries who have exclusive or shared sales rights to all the publications of a particular publisher. On occasion - and frequently in developing countries - the national agent is himself a publisher. This has resulted more and more in two-way arrangements, where the publisher in the developed state also distributes the products of his foreign representative. None of the above approaches is limitative; that is to say, many publishers are involved in more than one and sometimes all of the possibilities listed above.

Rights and fairs

Most publishers have a Division of Rights and Permissions, a unit which, whatever its name, exists in order to license, against payment, the reproduction of a publisher's book in another country. If the outside publisher merely seeks to quote a part of the work, it is possible that the royalty payment may be waived. But the licensing of reproduction can be an important source of income for the author as well as his publisher. Some of the larger publishers even maintain offices in other countries to handle these operations although the list must be quite long - and quite attractive - to make such an investment economically feasible for a publisher.

The purchase and sale of rights is an important function of certain international book fairs. Basically, there are two kinds of international book fair: one designed for publishers, which concentrates on favouring co-publication and other arrangements between book producers; the other, like many national or local fairs, intended for the general public. It allows readers to see what is being produced in their own country and around the world. In the first case, however, publishers come together essentially to see what each is doing, to exchange rights or to plan joint operations. Increasingly, publishers from the developing countries are participating in this kind of international book fair, the most notable of which are Frankfurt and Bologna. As they grow larger and more experienced, they are occupying their rightful place on the international publishing scene.

Major distribution problems

(i) Language

Language is at one and the same time a means of communication and a barrier. In terms of international book distribution, two recent developments are changing

the picture that obtained for twenty or more years in which most trade was in a limited number of vehicular languages such as English, French, Spanish, German and Russian. The first is the increasing emphasis in many countries, particularly the developing ones, on production in national or local languages. This has been accompanied by a second phenomenon: the publication of books in these same local languages by expatriate publishers. American, British and Soviet publishers are more and more producing books in languages of limited diffusion.

This can create an additional problem for the developing world. Since, in most cases, developing countries do not have an extensive enough national literature to meet teaching needs, they tend to seek the answer - when instruction is in a national language - in translations of works already existing in more widely used tongues. This is particularly the case in areas which underwent British influence, with their emphasis on preserving local tongues. The use of local languages in schooling, particularly at the primary level, is less widespread in countries which were influenced by French, Spanish or Portuguese civilizations. Whether the local edition is in translation or in the original language, the question of negotiating the right of reproduction is posed.

When it is an expatriate publisher who produces a book in a local language, a feeling may result that cultural identity is being threatened. National rights are being transferred, so to speak, to another country. This is a particularly sensitive subject when the book in question is for primary education. To a number of thinkers in developing countries, textbooks are an area that should be reserved to national initiative, if only because a good textbook must have its roots in national experience. The other side of the coin, however, is that in many cases the local publisher cannot produce the textbook that is required in the needed quantities and within the time-limit set except at highly uncompetitive prices.

As far as works of general literature are concerned, reactions are much less intense. A number of authors in developing countries, moreover, believe that expatriate firms can guarantee broader distribution as well as more generous royalties.

(ii) Transport charges

If language affects distribution, distance and broader trade channels also are important. The rising expense of shipping books over longer routes seems normal. What is little noted, however, is that in some cases there are relatively few lines of communication between neighbouring countries. Rail transport between many countries of Africa, for example, is non-existent. Road traffic can be difficult. Even the plane may offer only irregular connections. Under these circumstances, it is sometimes less expensive to ship a book from Paris or London to an individual country in Africa than to send a similar book from one African state to another. Africa has been cited here as an example, but the same is frequently true in Latin America in relation to Spain and between North Africa and the Middle East. It is less noticeable in Asia.

For the individual publisher or bookseller, another factor intervenes. Most orders are for small quantities and these are normally sent by post rather than by rail, road, air or sea as separate shipments. While a comparatively large number of countries have special book rates in their postage schedules, not all do. Furthermore, in many countries, there has been a gradual erosion of these facilities. Book rates for foreign post, particularly for air mail, remain expensive and are limiting elements in international book trading.

Under the best of circumstances and in view of these transportation costs, it is not uncommon for a metropolitan book to be sold at double the price in a developing country. At first glance, this would seem to give an edge to locally produced books. On the other hand, the amount of money available for individual book purchases is often limited so that the larger amount that may be spent for a foreign book considered essential or more attractive leaves less for local book purchases.

(iii) Quotas and frontier formalities

Some developing states control the influx of foreign books by imposing quotas or customs charges - the latter, it must be said, quite rarely. The quota system has usually proved to be cumbersome and relatively self-defeating in the long run since it may keep out needed works as well as more frivolous ones. While few countries still charge import duties, many impose value added taxes or other levies.

Another and more effective way to limit imports is to control the amounts of foreign currency made available. There is a chronic shortage of foreign currency in most developing countries. It is not just a shortage with regard to the purchase of books, but for all purposes. The result is that the bookbuyer must compete within his country with manufacturers or importers of what may be considered more essential goods. In such a contest, government officials too often tend to assign books to a non-essential category.

Frontier formalities are also a restrictive element in foreign trade in books. Such time and energy consuming devices can be deadly when the shipment of books is intended to coincide with the opening of a school or university session. Even in other cases, booksellers dread the loss of interest by a buyer who has waited too long for the title to arrive.

Finally, the bookseller must know what books are available. While publishers in developed countries usually are careful to send catalogues and even salesmen to other parts of the world that represent potential markets, the reverse is rarely true of publishers in developing countries. The preparation and dispatch of information material on new books can be an important element in redressing the balance of trade in books between developing and developed countries. For their part, librarians and documentalists seek bibliographic material on books in print and the latter is usually only possible with the existence of deposit laws.

Many of the distribution problems listed above are the subject of concentrated remedial efforts at the regional or, more frequently, the subregional level. The Central American Common Market is a case in point but it is far from unique. Similar enterprises are underway in Africa and Asia as well as in other parts of Latin America. This favouring of intra-regional trade can become increasingly important for local publishers who otherwise would find a purely national market too small to make feasible the production of certain kinds of book, notably technical works.

IV. Standard-setting

An essential element in the growth of international exchanges is the existence of mutually acceptable standards. It is only in this way that those engaged in commerce can be certain that they will receive what they purchase and that the trust on which all exchange is based will not be deceived. For the most part, such standard-setting devices are the work of governments or international organizations of governments. These include declarations, recommendations, agreements or conventions, each having a differing degree of legal force but all having the effect of instituting a climate of law and confidence. Sometimes these standards are written into bilateral agreements between countries. Sometimes they are part of a panoply of regional measures. Often, they are more universal in intent and effect.

They are written often at the instigation of intergovernmental organizations; in other cases, they are the result of professional initiatives. Among the host of standard-setting measures, copyright is perhaps the basic one as regards books.

Copyright

While some persons write because they are consumed by an overpowering need to communicate a message, most authors - even the most compulsive - expect some compensation for their efforts. It need not be purely financial. Whether it is in terms of money or fame or time off from the office or some other advantage resulting from the act of creation, however, the principle of recompense remains paramount.

The acceptance of the legitimacy of the creator's desire to be compensated led to national protection of authors' rights. In many countries such protection has existed for centuries, almost since the invention of printing. It was not, however, until the nineteenth century that international efforts were initiated to protect the rights of an author in international commerce. Generally speaking, states accord as much protection internationally - but no more - as they do on a domestic basis.

In general terms, copyright is the right conferred by law on authors or other creative artists to control the reproduction, sale or performance of their works.(1) Such rights are twofold: pecuniary and moral. The first is self-explanatory: it is the right to financial compensation. The latter is the right of the author to see to it that his work is reproduced in the form he created and it includes the right to withdraw a work from public view (the right of repentance). Nevertheless, like all private rights, copyright contains limitations that may be imposed for reasons of public interest. Such reasons do not have the same force in every country. Additionally, the range of limitations is more or less wide in comparative law and seems to be intimately related to the economic, political and social structure in the country concerned.(2)

In any event, it is certain that when copyright is wisely handled, it can be a powerful stimulus to creativity and a means of increasing the flow of information and ideas. Mishandled, it can limit creation and impede the free interchange of ideas.

The crux of the problem would seem to be the balance that needs to be found between the right of the creator and that of the general public. This situation can be illustrated by Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. Article 27 states: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits". It then goes on to say, "Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author". It is the interplay between these two rights which determines what measure of protection the author is granted and what measure is reserved for the general public.

When the copyright owner is foreign, there is sometimes a more pronounced inclination to decide for the primacy of the user. It has been stated that when a book written in country X is reproduced without prior consent in country Y, the latter nation considers this normal usage, while the former calls it "piracy". It

(1) Ronald Barker, Books for All, Paris, Unesco, 1956.
(2) M.C. Dock, "Circulation des informations et propriété intellectuelle", in La circulation des informations et le droit international, Paris, ed. A. Pedone, 1978.

has also been argued that attachment to international copyright grows stronger in proportion to the increase in the number of a country's authors whose works are being reproduced outside the borders of that state.

(i) Berne Convention

However that may be, it was in 1886 that a number of European countries adopted a convention on international copyright at Berne (Switzerland), creating an international copyright union. Some 70 countries are today members of that union, which is now known as the World Intellectual Property Organization. Some years later, a Pan-American Convention was established covering many countries of the Western hemisphere.

Although the Berne Convention has been reviewed or revised periodically,(1) a number of governments declined to join it because they were not in agreement either with the nature of the protection provided or with the level of protection guaranteed. In particular, many developing countries felt that the Berne Convention was too rigid and did not take fully into account their preoccupations and their special problems.

One result of this feeling on the part of developing countries that had joined the Convention became apparent at the periodic review held at Stockholm in 1967. Developing countries were successful in getting the meeting to adopt a protocol to the Convention allowing compulsory licensing of works along with other concessions to their point of view.

While this protocol never took effect, it did result in movement on the part of the developed countries, including an increasing readiness to provide legal alternatives to solve some of the more pressing problems of the developing world. For example, there was the creation of an International Copyright Information Centre, with headquarters at Unesco, whose function was to stimulate and facilitate the transfer of rights between publishers in different nations. Simultaneously, a number of national centres also were created both in developed and developing states. Furthermore, planning was undertaken for a new review meeting, held at Paris in 1971, which would offer new solutions to some of the complaints.

(ii) Universal Copyright Convention

Early in its history, Unesco began work on a convention on copyright that might be more acceptable to those nations that had refused to join the Berne Convention. This resulted in the adoption in 1952 of the Universal Copyright Convention. It now has some 73 adhering states. UCC provides more flexibility in its provisions than other existing international agreements, particularly the Berne Convention. In 1971, at the time of the revision conference for the Berne Convention, revisions were also made in UCC during overlapping sessions.

An essential result of the two revisions was that provision was made in both conventions for a kind of obligatory licensing of a translation or reproduction if the editor from a developing country had been unable to negotiate a cession of rights directly with the copyright owner. This was surrounded, however, by a number of clauses protecting the copyright owner.

Permission to translate could be obtained three years after initial publication and the delay dropped to one year if the language into which the work was to be

(1) Paris, 1896, Berlin, 1908, Berne, 1914, Rome, 1928, Brussels, 1948, Stockholm, 1967, Paris, 1971.

translated was a local one. Such licences are non-exclusive and the works are limited to use in schools, universities and for research. They are usually not allowed to be exported.

Merely to reproduce a work, without translation, in a developing country, a period of five years after publication is required, in most cases, provided that the work has not been put on sale in the developing state at a price comparable to other such publications. This delay can be shortened to three years for scientific and technical works and extended to seven years for fiction and art books. Once again, the licences are non-exclusive and limited to use for education. In both cases, the copyright owner is entitled to royalties, in the currency of his land, fixed in conformity with the developing nation's practice for similar national works.

While the various revisions thus made in the two conventions diminished the differences between the two instruments, they did not eliminate them. On many points, the Berne Convention establishes protection norms that are more rigid than those of the UCC. The length of protection under Berne, for example, is 50 years after the death of the author. For UCC, it is 25 years after the death of the author. What is now similar is the international legal recognition of the special status of developing countries.

The discussion over the right of developing countries to obtain more easily licences to translate and reproduce copyrighted works had another indirect effect. It led to the development of model cession agreements which in many cases were directly negotiated by the government of a developing country or an education ministry instead of, as in the past, between two private publishers. India in particular early on had such standard accords with publishers in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The importance of such licences to publishers in developing countries can be seen in the particular situation in which they find themselves. Since these publishers have not yet been able to find or develop the authors necessary to meet the massive educational and developmental requirements of their countries, there must be massive importation of books from developed countries. Furthermore, when the publisher in a developing state determines that he will issue titles to meet stated needs, realizing that a local author cannot be found, he is impelled to consider the purchase of rights to a foreign title that meets his requirements. Many times, the publishers complained, such requests for licences to translate or reproduce a national edition of the work in question were met in the past either with silence or with a demand for royalties which they considered exorbitant. The revised conventions attempt to answer this complaint.

In other words, they have set some limits on the total right of the proprietor in order to take into greater consideration the needs of the user in developing countries. These limits, however, are not intended to deprive the copyright owner of all compensation: it is a limitation rather than an expropriation.

It may be well to note here that in publishing the proprietor may be the author, but it may also be the publisher to whom the author has ceded the exploitation of his work. In any event, it is almost always the publisher who reserves the right to negotiate licences.

In so far as Unesco is concerned, its position has always been one of seeking to reconcile the rights of the creative artist with those of the persons for whom his creation is intended. Unesco's role consists of organizing the protection of copyright so as to enable works to reach an increasingly large public and thus promote the development of education, science and culture. It is endeavouring to protect both the author and the user.

"The Organization, therefore, should not consider copyright, at either the international or the national level, solely from the point of view of commutative justice towards authors in their relations with users of their works; it should also take into account the educational and cultural needs of the international community, particularly the least favoured members of that community, and strive to find solutions which reconcile authors' rights and users' interests."(1)

This calls for the development of standards designed to encourage creative activity and then for the protection of the results and the stimulation of their diffusion. The goal is the promotion of access to protected works.

Importation of educational, scientific and cultural materials

(i) "Florence Agreement"

From its earliest days, Unesco began to look into the whole thicket of tariff and trade obstacles to the movement of books and other materials across borders. The Constitution of Unesco had charged it with facilitating "the exchange of publications, objects of artistic and scientific interest and other materials of information" and with recommending international agreements which will promote "the free flow of ideas".

The Agreement on the importation of educational, scientific and cultural materials was adopted by the General Conference at its fifth session in Florence. Seventy-three countries now adhere to it, more than half of them developing states. The Agreement entered into force in 1952, after ten states had ratified it. It is intended to free the movement of books, works of art, scientific equipment, audio-visual materials and articles for the blind from the shackles of customs regulations, discriminatory taxes and duties. The basic concept is the belief that the intellectual benefits of this free flow of materials which convey ideas and culture far outweigh the loss of tariff revenues involved. Furthermore, the materials concerned are essentially for scientific and cultural purposes rather than being purely commercial products. Indeed, printed matter that is too commercial - that contains too much advertising - is specifically denied the protection of the Agreement.

The Agreement covers a fairly broad spectrum of materials, but it singles out books, publications and documents for special attention. In the first place, it provides that contracting states shall not apply customs duties on these materials if they are produced by another contracting state. In fact, most signatories exempt from customs all produces covered by the Agreement regardless of their origin. There is nothing in the pact, however, to prevent states from imposing sales taxes at the same level as those on domestic products and fees such as handling charges. Contracting states also undertake to grant licences and foreign exchange unconditionally for books and publications consigned to public libraries as well as for official government publications and books and publications of the United Nations or any of its Specialized Agencies. The same facilities are to be granted to books and publications distributed free of charge by Unesco, to publications designed to promote tourist travel and to books and publications for the blind.

In the almost thirty years since the Agreement entered into force, scientific and technological progresses has brought about a transformation in the means of transmitting knowledge, marked not only by the appearance of new materials but also by the evolution of new forms and methods of communication. It has also been a period which has seen the attainment of independence by a large number of developing countries as well as a trend towards liberalization of trade. Along with the

(1) Thinking Ahead, Paris, Unesco, 1977.

crumbling of tariff and trade barriers has come the realization that the duties imposed on articles such as books actually produced very little revenue. It thus became possible to envisage further steps towards eliminating obstacles to the international circulation of educational, scientific and cultural materials, among which books figure.

(ii) Protocol to the "Florence Agreement"

Review meetings were held periodically to examine the functioning of the Florence Agreement and to recommend, if necessary, changes and improvements. As a result of one such review meeting in 1973, a draft protocol to the Florence Agreement was prepared, adopted by the General Conference at its nineteenth session and opened for signature in 1977. It entered into force in February 1982, six months after the date of deposit of the fifth instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession.

The protocol is open only to states which are parties to the Agreement and they may adhere to it either individually or through customs or economic unions if all members of such bodies participate already in the Agreement. Developing countries, as defined by the practice established by the General Assembly of the United Nations, may suspend or limit the obligations under this protocol relating to imports if such products cause or threaten nascent endogenous industry.

Changes involved in the protocol concerning the subject of this paper are the inclusion of documents and microforms as well as books and publications; a broader definition of public libraries, and books for higher educational establishments that have been recommended and imported by them as textbooks. Books in foreign languages, excluding those in the principal local languages of the importing country are also granted the facility of duty-free importation.

Furthermore, the protocol provides that contracting states will not levy internal taxes or other internal charges on foreign books consigned to public libraries, on official government publications or on books and publications of the United Nations or its Specialized Agencies.

As part of an effort to facilitate not only the free flow of information but also a balanced two-way flow between developed and developing countries, three other provisions are included in the protocol. The first calls upon contracting states to make every effort to facilitate international trade in the educational, scientific and cultural products of developing countries. The second requires the elimination of restrictions on exports such as duties or taxes. Finally, the protocol provides that material used for the production of books such as paper, printing inks, glue, etc. shall be exempt from duties. Along with these, machines for the processing of paper and printing and binding machines benefit from this exemption if machines of equivalent technical quality are not manufactured in the country of importation.

(iii) Customs conventions on temporary importation

Books, among other educational, scientific and cultural materials are frequently imported for temporary use and subsequently re-exported to the country of origin. At Unesco's request, an intergovernmental body known as the Customs Co-operation Council addressed this question and has prepared, in consultation with Unesco, five customs conventions. The first three, adopted in 1961, concern facilities for the importation of goods for display or use at exhibitions, fairs, meetings or similar events, on the temporary importation of professional equipment and on the ATA carnet for the temporary admission of goods. In 1968, the Customs Co-operation Council adopted a convention on the temporary importation of scientific equipment and two years later on the temporary importation of pedagogic material.

The convention on goods for display is of particular interest to book publishers since it covers book fairs along with exhibitions or meetings concerned with any branch of learning, art, craft, sport or scientific, educational or cultural activity. It provides for the temporary admission free of import duties and taxes of goods to be displayed or used at an event. It also provides that import duties and taxes shall not be levied nor any other economic measures imposed on limited quantities of free publicity material in connection with the foreign goods displayed. Catalogues are specifically mentioned.

The convention on the ATA carnet relieves the importer of the requirement that a deposit be left during the period of importation. The carnet serves also as a customs declaration and constitutes a guarantee underwritten by an approved association.

The convention on pedagogic material also indirectly touches books. It covers any material used for purposes of education or vocational training such as slide and film-strip projectors, closed circuit television equipment, audio-visual materials, mobile libraries, language laboratories, material for the handicapped, machine-tools for learning a trade or craft, etc. Thirty-five to forty-five states have ratified these three conventions.

The other two conventions enumerated above have no connection with books, concerning scientific equipment, for the one, and journalistic, theatrical and musical equipment for the other.

Unesco conventions on the exchange of publications

Unesco itself has adopted two other conventions affecting books, both during the tenth session of the General Conference in 1958. One concerns the exchange of official publications and government documents between states and derives from an earlier convention of Brussels in 1886, as well as from various regional agreements. It calls for the prompt and customs-free exchange of such documents as national bibliographies, state handbooks, bodies of law as well as parliamentary documents reports and journals and administrative publications. Forty states have ratified this convention as of 30 September 1981.

At the same General Conference, a further convention was adopted on the international exchange of publications which has been ratified by thirty-nine states. This extends the previous convention to exchanges between non-governmental institutions of an educational, scientific and technical or cultural nature which are non-profit-making in character. The publications to be covered include, specifically, books as well as newspapers and periodicals, maps and plans, prints, photographs, micro-copies, musical works, Braille publications and other graphic material. Once again, the exchanges are to be unfettered by customs charges. In both conventions, moreover, exchanges are to be co-ordinated by a national exchange service, where one exists, but this is not essential.

V. Supplementary measures to ease the flow of books

The measures in favour of increasing international exchanges of books are frequently of a less legalistic nature. They are pursued on various levels: intergovernmental, governmental and professional. Taken together, they represent a broad approach to the effort to allow books to play their rightful role in the promotion of peace and international understanding. Individually as well as collectively, they also point the way towards further steps that need to be taken to create a more balanced and freer flow of books.

Not surprisingly, Unesco has been at the centre of many of the intergovernmental measures. In turn, Unesco has approached the other relevant intergovernmental agencies to bring their expertise to bear on specific problems.

Thus, for example, the services offered by the International Copyright Information Centre that was established at Unesco have moved on beyond information gathering and the preparation of model contracts for translation and reproduction. They are now part of a joint international Unesco-WIPO service for access by developing countries to works protected by copyright. The main objective is to improve and extend the efforts already made to assist developing countries in overcoming the legal, administrative, economic or practical obstacles which prevent their access to protected works.

GATT

Similarly, when the problem is one of customs or trade barriers, Unesco has gone to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It was that organization that helped in the drafting of the two Unesco Agreements on the international circulation of educational, scientific and cultural materials (the Florence and Beirut Agreements). In recent years, GATT has been a forum for Unesco efforts to reduce tariffs and other trade obstacles to the international movement of the materials used in making books: paper, printing inks, printing and binding machinery; but also the new electronic means of typesetting and editing as well as the cameras and films needed for photo-offset printing. During the course of the global and regional negotiating sessions organized by GATT, it should be possible to bring once again to the attention of Member States the importance of adopting specific measures to stimulate the development of book industries and the exchange of books between the countries of the world.

UNCTAD

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had from the outset its attention called by Unesco to the problem of access by developing countries to educational and scientific materials. In successive reports both to the sessions of the Conference itself and to meetings of its Trade and Development Board, Unesco pointed out the inescapable link between education and development. Nevertheless, the developing countries were unable to make the educational progress necessary for lack of the infrastructure and materials that were essential. Despite the technological possibilities that have opened and all co-operative efforts, the share of developing countries in international trade in educational and scientific materials - chief among which are books - remained small and the international exchange of information was seriously out of balance.

Unesco informed UNCTAD of the need for foreign aid to developing countries within the framework of increased international co-operation so that these countries might establish the capacity for national production. Loans, credits and subventions could simultaneously permit the developing countries to purchase the materials that were indispensable for scientific and educational progress. Measures should also be taken to solve the problem of shortages of foreign currency. Finally, it was noted that the developing states needed help in meeting the problems created by soaring prices of paper for books. The establishment of national paper industries in many of the developing countries was feasible in that the raw materials were available. For that reason, a twofold attack was called for: aid in the purchase of paper immediately, and assistance in the development of endogenous paper industries that could serve not only the country itself but also could become a source of export

income. In that connection, Unesco recalled that the General Conference had authorized action in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNCTAD and the United Nations Environmental Programme to establish a world paper bank.

Through UNCTAD and directly with the World Bank group and regional banks for development, Unesco urged financing for such projects as well as for others designed to develop endogenous publishing and printing industries. Bilateral funding should also be mobilized for this purpose.

Unesco Coupon Scheme

In an effort to counteract the chronic shortages of foreign currency that afflict many developing countries, Unesco established a Coupon Scheme to eliminate that obstacle to the circulation of certain categories of materials. Starting in 1948, the Coupon Scheme allows a country with a weak currency to use that currency to buy coupons which it can then sell to institutions or individuals in the country for use in the purchase of publications, films or scientific materials. Unesco provides the hard currency necessary for the system to function and which is used to reimburse purchases in a country with a strong currency. The system has worked well as far as it goes. It is limited by the amount of funds available, particularly by the inability of Unesco and the United Nations system as a whole to use the non-convertible currency acquired in return for the coupons.

Universal Postal Union

Unesco has worked closely with the UPU which, from its establishment in 1874, has always encouraged the full use of postal services for the free flow of information. Until 1939, most developed countries accorded reduced rates for the shipment of books, newspapers and periodicals. The Second World War thoroughly upset postal systems with a resulting increase in rates.

From 1952 onwards, Unesco made detailed proposals to the Universal Postal Union Congresses. Since UPU regulations provide that only Member States can present proposals, Unesco each time had to persuade a country to act on its behalf. Among the suggestions that were adopted by UPU members over the years have been recommendations for a fifty per cent reduction on overseas mail of books and periodicals. Other suggestions were for free mailing for publications destined for the blind as well as arrangements for payment in national currencies of subscriptions to foreign periodicals. Printed matter, it was hoped, would be freed also from handling and storage charges.

While Unesco has continued to submit proposals along these lines to the Universal Postal Union Congresses, recent years have seen a marked reluctance of states to liberalize their treatment of books and other printed matter. Indeed, the movement has been in the other direction. Permission has now been accorded to UPU's Member States to increase their charges on international mail. Mail rates for books may go up by as much as 50 per cent, that is, unless Member States decline to take advantage of the authorizations.

To counteract this tendency towards higher rates, major information campaigns will have to be undertaken in Member States and in the various regional postal unions which fix mail charges for limited groups of countries. Once again, while Unesco can serve as a focus for such efforts, the actual submissions must be by states rather than intergovernmental bodies.

In connection with efforts to reduce mail charges for books, the International Publishers Union has called attention to an interesting initiative in one

Member State (United States of America). Postal authorities in that country have fixed a specially reduced library rate which covers shipments to and from schools, universities, public libraries and non-profit organizations.

The Congresses of the Universal Postal Union are normally held every five years. The forthcoming Congress will be in the year following the World Book Congress.

International Air Transport Association

As with the UPU, the rules of IATA do not permit an international organization to submit proposals directly. As a result, the suggestions that Unesco has made over the years to IATA have had to find a sponsor in one of the airlines that belong to the association.

From the beginning of air cargo carrying, printed matter benefited from special rates because it represents almost ideal air cargo. Most freight shipments take one cubic foot for six kilos. In the case of books and printed matter, one cubic foot can store twelve kilos. In 1953, on Unesco's urging to member airlines, IATA agreed to extend the printed matter reductions to cover books. This meant reductions of as much as fifty per cent in book shipment charges by air. Later, IATA agreed to extend these reductions to other categories of material such as publications in Braille and to reduce the minimum weight limits required in order for a shipment to benefit from the reductions. In recent years, IATA, pushed by company needs to show profitable operations, has declined to recommend further concessions.

It should be noted that a majority of the airlines which are members of IATA are government-owned or controlled. Barely one-third are completely private.

Government initiatives

It is apparent from an examination of international initiatives that the key to progress frequently lies in the hands of national governments. It is equally evident that all governments are subjected to conflicting pressures as, for example, in the case of all shipping charges. On the one and, there is the desire not to continue to lose money on these operations. On the other, the desire to stimulate the exchange of information and to broaden awareness of a country's particular contribution to world culture. In that connection, it may be informative to examine at some length the action that the government of one state (France) takes to stimulate the international exchange of books. While details will certainly differ from other countries, many of the actions are repeated in other developed countries.

In the first place, three ministries have budgets to stimulate the diffusion of books abroad: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Co-operation and the Ministry of Culture and Communication. A considerable part of these funds is used simply to purchase books from national publishers for distribution abroad. Almost one-third is devoted to promoting sales.

In the first instance, the government has tried to stimulate the growth of common services that can group the efforts of many publishers and make them more effective. These services are designed to provide at minimal cost for all book exporters of the country information such as bibliographies of works and lists of customers, the handling of small orders, debt collection, guarantees of payment in certain cases and aid with shipping costs.

Among other activities is assistance for exports that are grouped according to subject-matter. That is to say, publishers who are organized in units specializing in scientific works, children's publications, social sciences and literature

receive financial backing for their efforts to export. In addition, the state contributes to participation in as many as fifty international fairs and scientific congresses a year.

Individual book sales abroad are stimulated by a joint ordering service and by computerized documentation on books in print and on some 150,000 potential customers abroad.

Still another government-supported organism is concerned with guaranteeing publishers against possible losses for political or commercial reasons when they export. A debt-collection service is also provided.

A financial organization has also been established to lend money to publishers in order to permit them to undertake publication of works of cultural interest which might equally have an export market. Special discounts are offered to promote the sale of books in countries ravaged by inflation or which have little money for imported books. The use of air freight for book exports has been encouraged by underwriting part of the cost of such operations.

Where the government has decided that it is impossible to sell books in its language, it has either given them away or helped subsidize their translation. As many as 114 titles have been so aided in a year. Of that number, 65 were scientific and technical titles. In some other cases, assistance is provided in the form of a credit to the national publisher so that rights can be ceded for translation at lower cost. The same procedures have favoured the translation into the language of the country of works in other tongues. During 1977, 19 titles received such assistance from the government body concerned with books.

While such a comprehensive programme is evidently one of a developed country, it is conceivable that developing countries also could employ all these techniques on a smaller scale (and, consequently, at lesser cost) or on a regional basis. In the opinion of many book professionals, regional initiatives along these lines by the developing countries offer the best hope for stimulating the growth of book exports. Existing regional structures, including customs unions and book development centres, could serve as nuclei for such efforts.

Activities by the book professionals

In the final analysis, most international trade in books is in the hands of the professions themselves and it is their initiative that contributes most directly to its growth. It should be noted also that the book professions have consistently attempted to further the role of the book in international understanding.

At most of the major international book fairs in developed countries, room is set aside for publishers from the developing countries and often space is provided free of charge. Publishers' associations in many developed states have organized training courses for their counterparts in other parts of the world while many individual publishers have provided in-house opportunities for developing state nationals to acquire the latest skills. A notable example of interregional cooperation on an individual basis has been the establishment by a Japanese publisher of the Noma prize for African books.

Booksellers and librarians have also offered opportunities for training. Furthermore, the development of regional bibliographies has been a major aid to international commerce in books.

Concerted action by the book professions can help to focus the attention of the public as well as that of governments on the significance of the role of books in individual well-being, economic and social progress and international understanding.

What is important is the continuum of efforts by all concerned to make books available in all parts of the world, to enable them to fulfil their function as educators and bearers of culture, to be used for practical purposes but also for the occupation of leisure and for personal enrichment. The key to this is certainly the development of the capacity of each part of the world to make its own contribution so that the international movement of books is not merely the monopoly of a few but consists of many streams, some large, some smaller, all flowing towards the same sea of readers: the world's literate population.

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